

Rob's Corner in Calgary



Being a single parent

Being a single parent is pretty much a tough affair in this day and age. Being a single mom or dad in Calgary could mean you may land up on a mattress in a church basement. The cost of living just keeps on going up and up. Where once upon a time 15 to 20 years ago one good steady job would almost take care of everything, nowadays it takes about three or four part-time jobs to accomplish the same thing. If you have a kid with special needs it becomes even more difficult; more so now with the recent cuts to education and now probably larger classes and fewer teachers. Well it looks pretty grim.

Words of wisdom

It never pays to be angry constantly. It doesn't pay to be greedy, if you have the cash and are earning a good living. It pays to be kind to people you don't know or have just met no matter their looks. It never pays to ignore people who have not done you any harm. It never pays to hate.

Question for the day

Back some time ago in the USA, when they declared war on drugs, what were they really declaring war on—the pushers? the drug addicts? the drug smugglers?

What I see across North America is really not a war on drugs but a war put on the drug addicts. If you take a look at what's going on in Vancouver as an example, Ottawa is trying its best to shut down the only safe injection site in Canada, as far as I know.

My say for the day: Be honest, be fair, be the best that you can.

Redneck pride

They're proud of their town, no one dares speak of negativity. Their oil is their sacred cow, their treasure. They love their county, rock, pop and rap. They party hard and to the max of their physical ability. They rarely share their good fortune—that's mine! They are usually of one mind and don't care for too much change.

Words from the street

I read in the paper fairly recently that Calgary has more people who are homeless than Vancouver. I personally know of some street people who are camped close to the downtown core of Calgary, somewhere along-side of the Bow River. Some of Calgary's homeless would rather sleep outside than in a shelter—too many rules for one thing.

Did you know?

Starting in 1993 there was a paper that originated out of Vancouver, a street paper called Spare Change. Well, there are still three of their original vendors left here in Calgary — me, Andie and Pete, who are out there selling a paper called Alberta Street News. I'm in Kensington NW, Pete's on 17th Avenue, 700 Block, and Andie is on 4th Street just below 17th Avenue SW. Also you may find one more vendor, last but not least, Nick, a former Calgary Street Talk vendor who sells on 8th and 8th in downtown Calgary.

The new tough on crime bill — law and order!

The tough new law and order bill before parliament in Ottawa in my view has a lot of flaws. For one thing, prisons across Canada are already overcrowded. Less money is being spent on prevention. They (law enforcement officers) will never be able to stop the flow of drugs and weapons into this county.

Not enough is being spent on helping people find affordable housing, which puts more pressure on cities and towns to create more shelters. In my view this new tough-on-crime bill will create more poverty, more crime and more starving Canadians.

Rob Champion

Alberta Street News

Volume 9 Issue 2 2012



Vendors pay 50 cents per paper



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Alberta STREET NEWS

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Alberta Street News is an independent publication of the Edmonton Street News Society. It is produced by volunteers and sold by street vendors.

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Mission

Edmonton Street News Society provides a voice, employment and social support to those who need these, and communicates perspectives dealing with poverty and social justice, by education and communication activities, including publishing a street newspaper

Values/Beliefs/Guiding Principles

We believe in being inclusive and encouraging
We believe that human rights are fundamental to living together
We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to earn and control their money
We believe in journalistic and organizational professionalism and integrity
We believe the public needs to know about issues around poverty and social justice
We value community and connecting with others
We value passion and determination
We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to learn, develop and use communication skills

The views presented in this publication are those of the writers.

Alberta Street News Launch



Calgary vendor Andie Wolf Leg, left, stands with managing editor Linda Dumont, centre, and Edmonton vendor Angelique Branston at the January 3 launch for the expansion of the eight-page Edmonton Street News to become the 12-page Alberta Street News, held at the paper's provincial office at 9533 10A Avenue, Edmonton, where they spoke with members of the television and print media. Vendors, writers, and board members were treated to free pizza and coffee while celebrating this special historical day.

Photo by John Zapantis

Down the plug-hole?

"Affluence creates poverty."

Marshall McLuhan

The great man could have said poverty creates affluence. And that affluence and poverty sometimes are caught in a death spiral for nations and civilizations.

Affluence creates poverty. Poverty creates more affluence, which creates more poverty in a potentially catastrophic cycle. History offers examples. Think Victorian England. Think empires: Spanish, French, Ottoman, British, Japanese, Russian.

Think the unthinkable: the American empire. Think even the brave little Canadian wannabe empire, with its puerile efforts to strut and fret beyond its weight upon the world stage.

Market fundamentalist wisdom says unregulated wealth in the hands of a few rich and super-rich is a good thing. It gives them the power, the means and the freedom—they start with the skill and the will—to use wealth efficiently. We and government should enable them to do what God (or the gods; or their own godlike powers) gave them the right and obligation to do: make money. Unavoidably, they will scatter enough crumbs that some will trickle down to the likes of you and me, even to depths of the economic pyramid below us.

It's called the "trickle-down theory" of economic growth. Things that wealthy people do, however selfishly, create more wealth. New wealth nurtures new industries. New industries create new jobs. Entire economies will grow and prosper. New cycles of growth and prosperity will follow.

It doesn't work that way. It never will, for long. From time to time nations (or quasi-nations: multi-national corporations) commandeer more than their fair share of resources, allowing a prosperity dividend to reach below the highest levels. But the game ends when the injustice of appropriation cannot sustain itself, when the benefits to the disinherited stop meeting their minimum needs or expectations. Eventually those whose resources (human, natural, spiritual, creative) are taken or manipulated will refuse to carry on.

The trickle-down theory only works (if at

all) when the economic pie grows, the population shrinks, or both. Otherwise, wealth gained by the rich comes from the pockets of the poor. And the wealth lost by the poor goes into the pockets of the rich. If a cycle develops, it can become vicious.

Have we reached that stage? The trickle-down promise has not come to pass. As the affluent have become wealthier, the poor and some of the middle class have become poorer.

A report (<http://www.nationofchange.org/reader/4048>),

based on data from Forbes Magazine, tells us that six people, the five children and one daughter-in-law who inherited the Walmart corporate empire, have the same net worth as the bottom 30 per cent of the population in the U.S. It doesn't take a raving conspiracy theorist to suggest that the Waltons might get together from time to time to talk about maintaining and extending their (good) fortunes. They openly spend millions lobbying in their collective interests, including for favourable inheritance laws to allow them to pass their wealth (and power) to their children. Do they devote much time to discussing the comfort and betterment of their employees, their suppliers, or the communities and nations where they operate? Unlikely. Business is business.

The same report says a mere 400 billionaires, including the Waltons, have the same net worth as the bottom 50 per cent in the U.S. These are not necessarily nasty people. Some are, but some are sympathetic, even philanthropic. Some admit the market grossly distorts relationships between rich and poor, and the privileges and opportunities of each; but such gestures are futile, unless they lead to change.

Is it healthy for so much wealth (and power, and opportunity) to rest in the hands of so few? Is it healthy for democracy, when the votes of the many bounce off walls of dollars erected by the few? When one citizen has one vote but the disposable millions of a tiny few can, and do, game the political, the economic, and social system to inflate their

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It's time to wear your toque, eh?

Nothing says "Canada" quite like winter. Nothing says "winter in Canada" quite like a colourful toque.

And nothing speaks to the dark side of winter in Canada like the knowledge that there are homeless on the streets when the weather turns bitterly cold, as it did in January.

It makes sense, then, that Raising the Roof, a national organization that works to end homelessness, would develop a campaign based on selling toques to raise awareness of and funding for homelessness in Canada.

This year's Toque Tuesday, will take place on February 7 in cities across Canada, including Edmonton and Calgary. Partner agencies in each city will sell toques before and after Toque Tuesday, and volunteers will be on the streets and at LRT stations in force that day.

This year 70 per cent of money raised will go support programs for homeless youth. Thirty per cent will go to Raising the Roof's Youthworks initiative. Seventy per cent will go to local agencies that work with homeless youth. In Edmonton, Raising the Roof's partner, Homeward Trust will donate its receipts to the John Howard Society's homeless youth program. In Calgary, Servants Anonymous will donate to McMan Youth and Family Services.

Toques can also be purchased online (<http://www.raisingtheroof.org/>) and at stores of Raising the Roof's regional sponsor, Crystal Glass.

Allan Sheppard

Impact of this year's Raising the Roof toque sales

Every toque sold supports real solutions at the community agency level:

- 1 toque means an agency can purchase a bus pass or some clothing for one of its youth, so they can get to an all-important job interview.*

- 10 toques fund the cost of supportive housing for one youth for a week, so that he or she can be helped to develop life-skills and break away from street culture.*

- for every 200 toques sold, an agency can put a youth through school for a year or connect him or her to an apprenticeship program for two months.*

(*Source: past toque campaign partner agencies)

Homelessness fact: Four out of five homeless Canadians don't live on the street

You have seen homeless people who live on the street, in parks, in doorways and in other public places. But the "hidden homeless"-80 per cent of those without a place to

call home-are much less visible. They are

- youth, adults, families and seniors who move from friend to friend and relative to relative while seeking affordable housing

- adults who live in cars and abandoned buildings and sleep in church basements for the winter

- women who accept housing from a man, even in dangerous situations, rather than freeze on the street

- children who are put in the care of Children's Aid Societies because their parents can't afford to care for them

(Source: Raising the Roof web site)

Things you can do to help

Volunteer with and contribute to the work of a charity or community group in your town or city that is working to assist the homeless and create housing.

- Start an innovative project like a local rent or utility bank to assist low-income families and individuals.

- Ask your municipality to allow homeowners to create apartments or second suites their homes. These can be the least expensive form of rental accommodation and can help families become homeowners.

- Invite speakers on homelessness and housing to meetings of your local school council, religious group, labour union or business council.

- Start or join an organization that is working on long-term solutions to homelessness.

- Advocate for more affordable housing in your community and across the nation.

- Secure support services to help people maintain their housing.

- Get community support for affordable housing initiatives in your area. Get the manual, "Yes in My Back Yard" from the

Community Choice Coalition.

- Organize a Raising the Roof toque campaign in your community or workplace.

- Support the work of Raising the Roof by making a donation

(Source: Raising the Roof web site)



Peter Serediak stands proudly by his decorated Valentine's

Day bike and would like to wish Edmonton and Calgary a Happy Valentine's Day. Serediak, 80, lives in Edmonton and has been decorating his bike for years while celebrating special occasions such as Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day Canada Day, Halloween, Christmas Day and New Year's. Alberta Street News would also like to thank U-Haul Self-Storage, located at 9521-51 avenue in Edmonton for allowing the use of their office as a studio for Serediak's photo shoot.

Photo by John Zapantis

Bad news story turned good

Waste Management of Canada donates \$5,000 in light of Bissell's recent break in

Only one day after the news release went out about the theft at Bissell Centre, a call came in from Dan Grosshauser's office (Area Vice-President for Waste Management of Canada Corporation) with good news. Waste Management of Canada would be donating a \$5,000 cheque to Bissell Centre in the coming week.

"When we read about the theft from Bissell Centre, we felt compelled to help. We're all neighbours, and I hope that this contribution from Waste Management of Canada in some small measure brings back the Christmas spirit that was dampened yesterday," added Grosshauser.

"We are thrilled to hear that we have such caring folks like those at Waste Management of Canada Corporation," says Bissell Centre Interim CEO, Mark Holmgren.

"This kind act, along with all of the support that we have received over the last 24 hours sure puts the Christmas spirit back into Bissell Centre!" he adds.

Joshua Marshall, Manager of Resource Development says, "On behalf of all of those people that we serve, I want to thank everyone for their generosity and let you know that you are contributing to the elimination of poverty in our community!" Bissell Centre is a community resource centre that has been in Edmonton's inner city since 1910. For individuals and families living in poverty, Bissell Centre works to help them find work, stable housing, mental health and addictions support, child care, skill enhancement programs, recreation and liaise with other agencies to provide further supports. www.bissell-centre.org

By Kristen Clark
Manager, Marketing & Communications

Down the plug-hole?

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personal influence on results?

The Occupy movement is asking such questions. The one per cent (the Walton 6 and the Forbes 400 among them) have answers that benefit themselves and the means to impose their answers. They will not think of the rest of us, the 99 per cent, more than they have to; which is to say, more than we insist they do, by the means available to us.

Have the promises of the trickle-down theory come true? The Walmart corporate empire began in 1972. The family has accumulated most of its current wealth since Ronald Reagan took office in 1981 and

launched the trickle-down revolution. So have most of the Forbes 400. Their affluence and means to control access to affluence have increased.

Poverty has increased, too. By every conceivable measure, the economic pie has shrunk in the U.S., Canada, and Europe in the last 30 years. The cycle is accelerating, like water spiralling down a plug-hole.

In Canada and Alberta, we keep our heads above water by desperately, profligately exploiting resources. Will it last? Can it last? Should it last?

You tell me.

Allan Sheppard

SOS from YESS

Edmonton, Friday, January 20: Global News reports that the Youth Emergency Shelter Society has fallen \$400,000 short in its campaign to raise \$1 million for 2012 operations. (<http://tinyurl.com/7wzmfg6>)

Global quotes associate executive director Sue Keating, who says YESS has never fallen so far short in its annual fundraising campaign. The agency will have to cut staff and try to protect programs.

Yess provides emergency shelter, housing and support services to youth at risk in Edmonton.

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-ASN staff

Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative leadership announced

Calgary is taking a step try to tackle the problem of homelessness in the city. It's still only a plan to make a plan, but that is more than, at most, two three other cities in Canada, have done. More, too, than Alberta and the federal government are doing.

Mayor Naheed Nenshi announced the makeup of an 18-member stewardship committee in a January 11, media release. He fleshed out the committee's mandate in his annual State of the City speech on January 17 (See sidebar and <http://tinyurl.com/6sh7khl>).

The committee has until March 2012 to

turn in a report, though co-chair semi-retired accountant and consultant Steve Allan says the members may ask for a small extension, because they are starting later than originally planned.

Allan was a member of the Calgary Committee to end Homeless that produced a 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness that began in 2008. "Work on that committee encourages me that we can find ways to do things differently," Allan says. That committee came up with a strategy the focused on one big idea, the Housing First model to end homelessness. Allan says the challenge to

end poverty is much more complex, and he anticipates coming up with three or four strategies, instead of one.

The Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative is jointly sponsored and funded by the City of Calgary and United Way of Calgary. "Getting involved was a no-brainer for us," says director of poverty initiatives and research Susan Gilmour. "We focus on vulnerable populations. Poverty is a deep and fundamental area where United Way has been involved for many years."

Allan Sheppard

Calgary's mayor on what communities want

Mayor Naheed began his January 17, 2012 state of the city address by commenting things he had learned from conversations with Calgarians during his first year in office.

"The remarkable thing about those conversations is that everyone wants the same thing. Everyone talks about the same kind of communities, the same kind of city. These are not complex things: I want to live in a neighbourhood where my kids can walk to school. I want to live in a neighbourhood where I can walk to the store. I want to live in a neighbourhood where my parents can live in the same neighbourhood and keep an eye on my kids when I need them, and where my grandparents can be close by. I want to live in a neighbourhood where it's not too far for me to go to work. I want to live in a neighbourhood where that second, or third, or fourth family vehicle is a choice for my family, not an absolute necessity for me to be able to live in this city.

"I want to live in a city that welcomes people from around the world, that welcomes investment and business from around the world, that makes sure that it understands that it is truly a global city.

"I want to live a healthy city. I want to live in a safe city. I want to live in a city where there are opportunities to do the things that make life worth living: like arts, like culture, like recreational activities, like

intellectual pursuits.

"I want a city that works. I want a city that provides me the services I need at a cost that's affordable. ...

"Does that look like utopia? Maybe. Maybe we can't get there. But that never, never absolves of us the absolute require-

ment to move in that direction and try, and to make sure that every decision we're making, every single day, no matter how small it seems is moving us further in that direction..."

By Allan Sheppard

Mayor Nenshi explains the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative

Excerpt from Calgary mayor Naheed Nenshi's state of the city address, January 17, 2012.

"What is it that, with all the interventions we've done; that with all the great stories of success that government and non-profit agencies can point to, in terms of helping individuals and families get out of poverty; why is it that the rates of poverty in the community have not changed? Why is it that child poverty, in particular, remains stubbornly high? What is it about the system that isn't working?

"So that's a simple question...The process, too, is very simple, which is get a bunch of really, really smart people together and say, 'Answer that question.' Spend some

time away from your daily job...to just think about that and to see if there is an idea out there...that shows us a new path forward, that helps us understand. We all know that when anyone in our community is poor, our community is poor, that our community is not working for everyone within it, and it's important for us to think about whether that can change.

"Is that just a fact of life and humanity? Is that just how cities work? I refuse to believe that. I believe that we can do a better job, and that's really what the thrust of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative is about..."

By Allan Sheppard

Edmonton YMCA Welcome Village project to develop 150 units of affordable housing

The Edmonton YMCA received \$24.9 million in provincial funding for the their Welcome Village affordable housing project. This endeavor is expected to develop 150 additional affordable housing units as well as create employment within the construction industry in Edmonton. In addition to provincial funding, the City of Edmonton is providing \$3.5 million in funding, design, development consultation and land. The Carrington Group of Companies is contributing \$3 million; Capital Region Housing Corporation has invested \$1.2 million and \$3 million is through the YMCA 'Straight from the Heart' campaign. The Oilers Foundation has committed to provide funding to support costs for youth attending school who are living at the YMCA Welcome Village.

This is the second year the province is providing support through Request for Proposal funding. Projects eligible for this year's total funding of \$142 million include the construction of new rental or home ownership units, the purchase and renovation of existing rental accommodation, the conversion of non-residential space to residential

units, or the development of secondary suites.

This is part of the Alberta government's five-year strategy to create more than 11,000 affordable housing units across the province by 2012. The province committed \$309 million in new funding in 2008/09 in support of affordable housing. The RFP funding is a component of the \$309 million in capital funding.

The YMCA Welcome Village is part of the first phase of the Boyle Renaissance Project, a multi-phase, far-reaching community redevelopment situated in the area between 95 and 96 Streets and extending north from 103A Avenue to the LRT tracks. The Boyle Renaissance is a made-in-community solution that will provide a range of market and affordable housing units, and a variety of different services and programs that include child care, family services, community, social, recreation and park spaces, community gardens, and more.

The Boyle Renaissance Development Association (BRDA) is working closely with the YMCA of Edmonton, Capital Region

Housing Corporation, Boyle Street Community League, and the City of Edmonton to oversee construction of Phase I, the two-building YMCA Welcome Village.

The east building contains the project's affordable housing and consists of 60 units for low- to moderate-income families; 35 units for low- to moderate-income individuals; 30 units for couples; and 25 units for special needs clients. There will be 50 bachelor, 40 one-bedroom; 45 two-bedroom; and 15 three-bedroom units. The project includes 15 units which are barrier-free.

The west building is a new community centre that includes the YMCA Welcome Village's Child Care Centre, a YMCA Family Resource Centre, and the offices and multi-purpose programming and physical activity space for the Boyle Street Community League. The development will also have ample outdoor park space and community garden space for community use.

The construction of the YMCA Welcome Village is projected to be completed in early summer 2012.

By Linda Dumont

The Seasons of Life

By Marie Joki

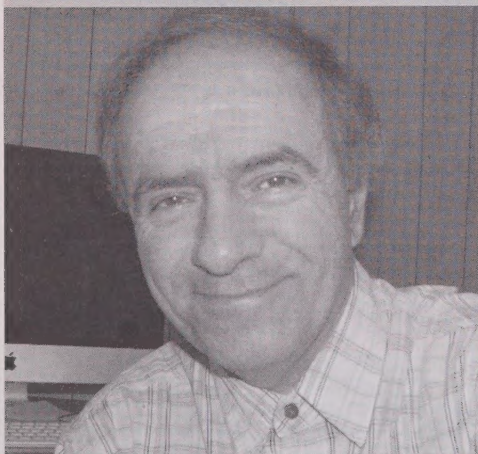


The beauty of spring, with flowers in bloom,
The smile on people's faces,
The budding trees, the bloom of a rose,
Nothing can replace this.
A spectacular waterfall running over the rocks -
You feel such inner peace.
You watch a beautiful sunset, this tranquility will never cease.
At the beginning of life, we learn so much; we blossom and we bloom,
We look forward to graduate; we'll be able to leave home soon.
We start a part-time job to help pay the college dues.
We have to decide what we'd like to do, a profession we must choose.
Others aren't so fortunate, there are problems they must face,
They are vulnerable, and alcohol and drugs, they chose to not think of what they may face.
Look not down upon them, they have a hard road ahead,
Encourage and assist them with positives phrases said.
With the onset of summer we're more

mature, we choose a profession, challenging things we have to face, so proud are we, we found our niche, this is our chosen field,
Things are going successfully, we're reaching our life's goal,
but do we stop and think about the fragile human soul?
Others not so fortunate face much more difficult times with drug and booze addictions, inner peace is hard to find, with love and compassion, we should try and understand, instead of criticism, we should lend a helping hand.
A gentle spirit in his summer years, tried in every way,
To bring happiness to his friends, each and every day,
Stephen Will Conley, a senseless beating by youth to him unknown,
The creator saw his suffering, and so he called him home.
In autumn the leaves change color, and then they start to fall,
We change as we grow older. Some decisions we make are small,
Some of life's major decisions, we find we made in haste,
Sometimes things are difficult, with situations we must face,
Usually things work out for us; we've a positive road ahead,
We look forward to retirement, as upon life's road we tread.
The winter is upon us, with snow upon the ground,
We retire from our chosen career other interests we have found,
Deciding we'll help others, we look forward to each new day
We like to volunteer our time to help the community in every way,
As we travel upon life's journey, such peace we feel within,
It's a good thing to help others, the game of life we win.

I'm not looking forward to getting old

By John Zapantis



John Zapantis

I'm not looking forwards to getting old.
Anyone who's proud of that seems certainly bold.
I've been told by many seniors over the course of time.
Getting to be like them at their age especially up in their late eighties,
isn't actually a party made in Heaven.
I guess when you're that old it's like doing life's sentence in the house of detention.
Some old folks when they were young and restless led a life of crime
and a lot of emptiness inside, others seemed to always have worked while,
in a whole different world where family came first and lived for wife and kids, so I was told.
Many from poverty as youngsters who

never stood a chance,
No matter how hard they seemed to try to break away from
the bondage of family despair,
or even fatherless and motherless and a runaway tragedy of all sorts and the systems way of entrapping themselves and at times at no fault of their own.
Some who started to get old, wondered if they'd ever live on to see the day when they'd reach the age of 50,
while other coasted past that mark anticipating
retirement at the ripe old age of 60.
Funny how those who've had it so good for most of that time,
can't imagine why a guy like myself at 55 wouldn't be looking forwards to that Golden Time,
especially when there's no future for full-time employment,
because of age discrimination,
you who can't understand why I'm in no hurry the least, in getting older along the way,
if you went through the Hell I've been through looking just as old as some one whose 65 or, feeling like your 65, but actually 55 with no real future to look forwards to and having my talent wasted through in through,
while I continue to feel less motivated while struggling to climb up-hill.
For now I don't seem to have a hope in Hell, but one thing I know for certain,
I'm not looking forward to getting old.

Saved from addiction

By Marie Joki

With no place to go, from home she ran,
in anger she ran away,
With no idea of what to do or where she was going to stay,
Never to go home again, was her only thought,
For daily in frustration, with her friends and family she fought.
She knew not what ahead she'd face,
being on her own,
She hoped that some new friends she'd make,
And she wouldn't be alone,
She noticed some kids about her age as in a circle they sat,
Come and join our friendly group, here is where it's at.
It will make you feel much better your troubles will go away,
Try this, you'll like it, she heard a young man say,
He handed her a pipe to smoke, the hit was great and fast,
She knew she'd met some new friends, she could now forget her past.
I'm not from here, she said to them, I have no place to stay,
You can stay with me a young girl said, but your way you'll have to pay,
The man, who handed her the pipe, said quick money you can make,
I'll give you some stuff to sell for free; I'm giving you a break.
Try this one, he said to her, to you there'll come no harm,
He produced a needle and a syringe and put it in her arm,
She remembers not what happened then,
She awoke in a hospital bed,
They found you in an alley, a kindly doctor said.
I'll get you some assistance, this you can not fight alone,
You must seek intervention, this you can't do on your own,
She got some help to fight it, encouragement to be strong,
They told her to have inner strength, with help she could go on.

His difficult life.

My youngest brother! Amazing! He faced many difficulties including raising three children alone. In his younger years, he was very tolerant, but now that he is 58, his patience is wearing thin. He, when younger, spoiled his daughter and the grand kids. Now, he pays the price of doing that. My niece Seanna doesn't thank him for Christmas presents and talks to him with disrespect. The grand kids the same thing.
He worked for the provincial government as a bridge inspector. He was with the provincial government for 23 years, having worked earlier in construction.
I also took things for granted. Many times he helped me move and I didn't even pay him for his assistance. He had his own problems to deal with, let alone mine. These last times he assisted me, I paid him and he really appreciated it. I wish I'd had been more considerate. We take too much for granted and don't consider the other person's circumstances.
Spoiling kids, one pays the price. He would also tolerate our smoking, even in his house. Finally he had enough. Both Seanna and I smoke outside now. I realize I should have been more thoughtful and think of what he faced every day.
In the new year, my resolution is to be more considerate and not take things for granted. Happy New Year every one, may you all have a great year, 2012.

By Marie Joki

Calgary street preacher arrested

Just before Christmas, on December 22, 2011, a street preacher was arrested at City Hall in Calgary when he and his followers started a prayer circle. That was the third time Artur Pawlowski and his followers from Street Church Ministries held a service at City Hall last fall. Six people were charged with trespassing which carries a \$287 fine. The group had been warned by City Hall that they must apply to hold an organized event in the atrium; however, Mr. Pawlowski believes that the city has a bias against Christians.

About the incident Pawlowski said on his website, "We went today to the Atrium to celebrate our faith and share about our saviour during the Christmas season. Corporate security and the Calgary police were already waiting for us when we arrived. I was told by the corporate security that the gathering was illegal.

"Let me be more specific about what we came to do. We brought Bibles; we brought a guitar and a bongo drum, so that the rest of the citizens, we would remind ourselves that this time of the year has been used for hundreds of years as a time to celebrate the birth of our lord and saviour Jesus Christ. Before I had a chance to open the Bible I was already threatened that there was already a trespass notice being written for me and, if I would continue with the illegal gathering, I would be served with a document, and if I refused to leave I would be arrested and the police were already waiting to do so."



Artur Pawlowski being arrested by Calgary Police at Calgary's City Hall on December 22, 2011.



Artur Pawlowski preaching on the street. Photos by Artur Pawlowski

Instead of leaving, Pawlowski grabbed the Bible and preached for about fifteen minutes, and then the worshippers started to sing. Overall, there were about 30 people gathered there, and six, including Pawlowski, and the worship leader, were arrested.

Pawlowski said he is going to file a lawsuit against the City of Calgary for illegally kicking him and his followers out and for the arrests. He said, "This is seven years of harassments. We took the mayor's (Mayor Naheed Nenshi) offer that the atrium of the City Hall was Calgarians living room and he encouraged people to come and use it. If Occupy could use the atrium for their meet-

ings we decided we could, too. There have been Buddhist meditations and other organizations using it. It's clearly discrimination against Christians."

He said he was planning to hold another meeting at the City Hall atrium on January 24th.

Charges on prior conviction were dropped in November 2011

This was not the first time Pawlowski has been arrested while ministering. As of November 2009, Pawlowski had received 70 tickets in the process of preaching the gospel

Break-in leaves woman frustrated

One of my best friends was devastated one day when she came home, only to find her apartment trashed. She lost her laptop computer, some important documents and some of her jewellery, and other items were completely trashed. She immediately called the police who came to investigate her problem.

Some of her important documents were discovered on Edmonton's South Side by a gentleman a few days after the break in. He found her phone number among her documents and called her to ask if she had lost some important documents. She said that she had. She also told the gentleman that she lived in the downtown area. He then brought them to her. When she phoned the police to let them know that a gentleman had

found the important documents, the police told her not to open the bag holding the documents.

Among the documents, there was a driver's licence. The police took the documents to the police station; my friend followed them and they opened the container. They showed her the driver's licence. She immediately recognized the picture. It was the man who lived downstairs. She was in shock. The police kept the container of documents at the police station.

The gentleman who lived downstairs from my friend told her some time ago he had a master key. She thought it was for the storage rooms in the basement. She realized that her apartment windows and door weren't damaged. Thinking about it, she con-

fronted the gentleman below her apartment, saying this was an inside incident. Of course he denied it. The police treated this incident like it wasn't serious enough to charge him with entering an apartment without permission and trashing it with some outside friends, even though his driver's licence was among the documents found. Then, he had the nerve to ask my friend to drive him to the police station to pick up his driver's licence. She said absolutely no. She also told to the police that she thought that he had a master key to everyone's apartment. She changed her locks, cancelled her bank card, obtaining a new one. These were completely frustrating circumstances.

By Marie Joki

for preaching at City Hall

and feeding and clothing the poor.

November 1, 2011, he was in court on charges of giving away free goods and services (illegally feeding the homeless), gathering a crowd, operating a barbecue, operating an amplification system in the a park, placing a sign in a park, and placing an electrical cord on a sidewalk.

Provincial court judge Anne Brown ruled that street preacher Artur Pawlowski's charter rights were violated when he and his church, Street Church Ministries, were charged under Calgary's park bylaws. All charges relating to the barbecue were withdrawn. Pawlowski pleaded guilty to running an electrical cord on a sidewalk, but the judge ruled that the fine be reduced on that charge to a symbolic \$1 which Pawlowski agreed to pay.

About the judge's decision, Pawlowski said, "This is a huge victory and, after years of fighting for our rights, a true vindication. Now we can confidently go back to the table with the City with a goal of working in the effort of taking care of Calgary's least fortunate citizens. At the end of the day we are talking about people here that are desperately looking and waiting for help, and we are more than happy to continue to provide them with both hope and necessities of life in the name of Jesus Christ. After all, that is what church is all about. Love in action."

Artur Pawlowski taking church to the street

Palowski said he got involved in street ministry because he felt the church he was attending wasn't doing what they should be for the poor. "It was all just talk, talk, with no action. I was a business man doing construction and renovations, and was an elder in a church. I always felt the church should be out there with the people who need help. We are to help the poor, the widows and the fatherless. The church wasn't doing that. I decided to go to the streets in 2003, where I joined a group of others. First we were buying pizza and handing that out, then we were making sandwiches. took all day to make them. Then we introduced barbecues.



People eating at Street Church Ministries.

"It is most rewarding. It's a church for the poor with preaching, worship, prayers and sometimes communion as well, outside on the street. The majority of people who come to us are barred from other places—criminals, drug addicts, prostitutes, they come to us. No one is forced to attend the services. They can eat as many servings as they want.

"We deal with the worst, and it's a joy when they change. We serve those who have been turned away by other agencies. Last year we served 200,000 meals on the street. We also support elderly people and families with kids, giving them food. We receive and distribute from \$50,000 to \$70,000 worth of food per month, all from private donations and the work s done by volunteers.

"We also have half-way housing for those who are serious, and who want to get out of their lifestyle. Usually they volunteer and want to give back.

"In 2007 we started another outreach in Kenya, as well as an orphanage, and in 2010 another street church like this one in Warsaw, Poland."

Street Church Ministries is an incorporated religious society within the province of Alberta. They receive no government funding.

Street Church Ministries sets up shop in front of City Hall on Monday at 6:30 p.m., Wednesday at 11 a.m., Friday at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday at 1:00 p.m. where they give out food and clothing and hold a worship service.

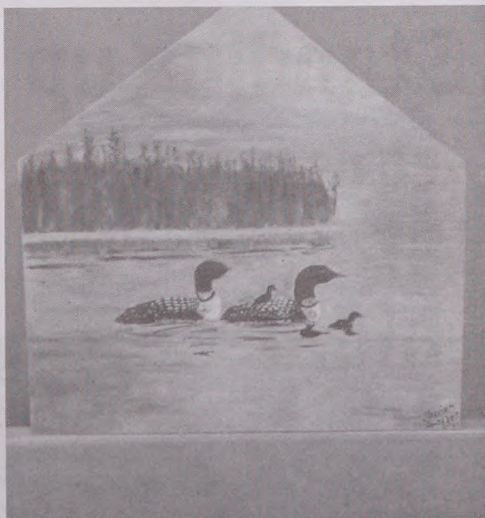
Story by Linda Dumont

Mustard Seed constructing affordable housing in Calgary

Construction has begun on The Mustard Seed's affordable housing development for homeless Calgarians, The Mustard Seed has been working towards the construction of an affordable housing development for the homeless for more than five years. On July 18, 2011 they moved one step closer to making that dream a reality when crews demolished 105 10 Avenue SE in order to make room for an apartment building that will be home to some of Calgary's most vulnerable residents, who are in need of safe, affordable housing. This was the first visible step in what is expected to be a 20-month building process. A ground breaking ceremony to kick off construction was held on September 16, 2011.

The Mustard Seed's affordable housing development, located on Centre Street and 10th Avenue SE, will be a 12-storey, mixed-use building that will include 224 studio and one-bedroom apartments, as well as parking, street-level retail services and one floor of administration and programming. In a city-wide context, the building represents a critical component of Calgary's 10-Year Plan to End Homelessness, which aims to provide housing for 1,500 chronically and episodically homeless by 2014.

by Linda Dumont



People attending the art programs at The Mustard Seed, Calgary as well as in The Mustard Seed, Edmonton have painted colourful pictures on 224 boards shaped like houses. They will be placed on the fence surrounding the construction site of The Mustard Seed's affordable housing development in Calgary. Photos by Rachel de Leon

Attending the conference in Nashville

It was a long bus ride from Calgary to Winnipeg and my ride was supposed to be safe and comfortable trip. It was even longer while I felt like my safety and well-being were ignored with a blind eye. Instead I was aware of the hostility from the guy I call the Nerd's negative energy in my presence. When I turned to look around and see what town or city we were heading into whenever he was awake, he had this blank, eerie, stare, with his dark brown straggly hair over his eyes. It appeared he was looking right through me. In the air that drifted in my direction from the air conditioning I could smell dirty body odour coming from him. He wouldn't give up in trying seeing if I was going to react to his idiotic behaviour. I was so relieved and felt the tension level over me and it was finally subdued within me when the Nerd guy finally got off in Winnipeg. I thought for sure he was going to the same place I was going - Nashville Tenn. I would've been an emotional wreck if that happened. I would've decided to go to the back of the bus to see if there was an area where there were less seated passengers.

The 2011 NASNA Conference of Events! After the Thursday night registration of events at about 4:30p.m. each of the participants received their NASNA Conference form packages. There were some snacks and refreshments as we mingled from 4:30 to about 8:00p.m., then Katie Bodiford, events planner for The Contributor Street Newspaper in Nashville Tennessee, asked me and the other participants to join her for supper. I told her I was without any pocket money so Katie paid for my tab at The South Street Original Smokehouse Crabshack & Authentic Dive Bar in Nashville, conveniently located at 907 - 20th Avenue South between Graceland and Gatlinburg. Everyone had something to order from the menu. I had the pumped chicken for \$12.95 plus tax. I didn't know it was going to be a half of a rotisserie chicken pumped with secret seasonings then slow smoked just right and served with one side-dish. The chicken was the size of a broiler chicken. I could only eat a quarter of the giant sized bird. I had to have a take out for the remaining chicken to take back to the campus. One of the participants had a digital camera with her and she took a picture of me devouring the pumped chicken.

The group enjoyed their food and alcoholic beverages reaching well into the midnight hour. Some of the group partied on past midnight, while I joined a small group who wanted to walk back to the Scarritt Bennett Center at The Cadwallader Hall Section of the Campus. It was an early night for the ones like me, who don't drink and did not want to come back to the campus too late. I knew if I didn't get back to the campus at a reasonable time I would have been dysfunctional from lack of sleep for the first day at the conference.

I want to thank Katie for her exciting and fun time and her hospitality in picking me up at the Nashville Greyhound Station and asking me to join her and the group going to the South Street Original Smokehouse and Crab Shack and Authentic Dive Bar! I had a no sense of direction. I would get lost in a one block radius. The area we were staying in was condensed with trees and brush with over 100 years of history. I remember waking up Saturday morning to the sounds of feet running up the stairs to the 2nd floor after 2 a.m. in the morning!

The NASNA 2011 Annual Conference started early with breakfast at 8:15 a.m. at the John Seigenthaler First Amendment Center. Then, at the end of Friday, October 14, at 3:30p.m., I mingled, meeting more new vendors, editors and managers and other administration staff. I had conversations and took some pictures with other groups. Then, everyone wanted to leave the First

Amendment Centre to take a break or nap by going back to their rooms to get ready to go by bus to the awards dinner.

Everyone gathered in the lobby of The Scarritt Bennett Center for transportation to the Awards Dinner in downtown Nashville. We departed at around 6:30 p.m. The Awards Dinner was held at the home of Won Choi at



Andie W.L. and Katie Bodiford, events planner for The Contributor Street Newspaper in Nashville Tennessee at the bus station.



Andie devouring a half of a pumped rotisserie chicken meal at the South Street Original Smokehouse Crabshack & Authentic Dive Bar in Nashville

226 3rd Avenue North, a former bank building turned private residence, which provided a unique setting for our 2011 Awards Dinner. The meal was fabulous! At the dinner, the other vendors, editors and administrative staff sat with their own familiar street

newspaper groups and were somewhat reluctant to make friends or to introduce themselves to the ones like me, who didn't know anyone there. No one even risked reaching out to me, sitting at the side of one of the banquet tables. Then, as the Awards Dinner was about to begin, one of the board of directors from NASNA came over and asked if he could join the table. I said, "Yes! Certainly!" He introduced himself as Rick Barnes from the Denver Street Newspaper. After that I didn't feel like I was all alone in a banquet room and invisible in a room full of strangers!

I was disappointed when the awards were read out for the Street Newspapers in the US and Canada. I thought that anyone could give a nomination from a street newspaper. I have a close friend from Lethbridge AB, for over 10 years, who has been mentoring me, encouraging me to write stories for the street newspaper business. Mark S. has encouraged me to continue my dream to write. I have been selling on Calgary streets. He told me he had tried to nominate me for the NASNA 2012 Awards, but whether it went through I hadn't heard as of writing this story today, but I have now learned that the Street Newspaper administration staff were the ones who would be entitled to nominate; for example: a Vendor for their own street newspaper. I can only dream now to see my name nominated on the big screen at the next 2012 NASNA Awards Dinner for being a nominee for writing for the New Alberta Street News.

I recall that there was one women vendor at the Awards Dinner who sold the highest number of papers throughout 2011. She won the NASNA Most Sold Papers award for the year 2011. Wow! What a way to be recognized and acknowledged! I remember myself being the Top Vendor in Sales for the 2009 Calgary Street Talk Newspaper! I was also told that I had written the most stories written by one vendor in that year of 2009! From what I know I hadn't heard if I was nominated or not with the NASNA Awards Dinner. I had never even heard that such an Awards Dinner event could ever happen and that vendors from the Calgary Street Talk Newspaper could have been nominated for every year. For the 2012 NASNA Conference I would be thrilled and ecstatic to be recognized and acknowledged by being nominated for writing on some contemporary Aboriginal issues on the Calgary, Alberta streets.

After the Awards Dinner we were free to ride the bus back to the Scarritt Bennett Center or stroll and explore the rest of the night life in downtown Nashville. I had lost

Standing up so no one stands alone



All Albertans deserve to live a dignified life with the support they need. That's why Brian Mason and Alberta's NDP Opposition stand for affordable housing, strong and humane social services, quality health care, improved mental health care and inclusive education. They put Albertans everyday needs first.

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Turn up the heat

All too often, when looking at poverty in Alberta, there is a tendency to concentrate on income. This is understandable given the increasing income disparity in our province. We have an abysmally low minimum wage rate, the income provided through social assistance is pathetic and there is widespread political and "business" opposition to such basic ameliorative measures as a "living wage". The lack of a liveable income is certainly a key element in the social construction of poverty in Alberta.

However, although it is an obvious point, income is only one element of the mathematics of poverty. We also have to look at expenses. Indeed, that is largely where the reach of income becomes increasingly inadequate, especially on a cumulative basis. Increases in the cost of living are particularly hard on those with either fixed or low-incomes. And this then leads to a monthly juggling of funds and a growing reliance on the charitable sector to help meet periodic shortfalls.

Lately, as a glaring example of the expenses part of the equation, there has been considerable talk about the high cost of power in Alberta. The Calgary Herald, for example, carried a number of stories related to the high cost of utilities, and the difficulties many people have in meeting these costs. A seniors' advocate spoke eloquently about his own experiences in trying to make ends meet. The Herald then published a chart showing the average comparative cost

of residential utility bills across North America in April 2011. Calgarians paid the highest average amount in Canada, and we were beaten only by San Francisco and New York City in all of North America. For the most part, these high costs are due to the Conservative government's doggedly ideological pursuit of deregulation.

Sure, power companies enjoy the large profits from this situation of quasi-monopoly, and can pay fines when they break the law regarding price manipulation (intentionally or unintentionally!). But deregulation has not been of benefit to the common person – a point made continually by the Alberta New Democratic Party. According to NDP Leader, Brian Mason, "High power rates put the squeeze on family budgets. Power-company CEOs are paid millions in salaries and bonuses while families are pinched. This system doesn't work."

The facts seem to bear out Mason's general point. But what does not working actually mean to families? Well, for some, it means increased calls to crisis lines, and an increased burden on churches and the charitable sector. For example, during the fourth quarter of 2011, 32% of the calls to 2-1-1 were seeking assistance with either utility or rent payments. Whether they get that assistance or not is another thing, but increased food bank use might well be related to the high cost of utilities.

However, despite the pain to some of our fellow citizens, Premier Redford has indicated

that she has no plans to revisit deregulation. From a political point of view this is probably understandable, especially when one looks at the impact of the royalty revenue debacle on the PCs under Premier Stelmach. But, political fortunes and expediency aside, this is an example of an ideologically driven policy decision that is actually hurting people and it doesn't have to be that way. Surely the well-being of all Albertans should come before profit? Particularly when a large measure of that profit comes from the private exploitation of our collective resources.

At root, we can, and should, re-regulate the power industry. As noted by Brian Mason "A regulated system would keep prices low and steady so Albertans can budget properly". Obviously, such a move will not end poverty in Alberta. Indeed, there is no one "big idea" that will end the social problem of poverty. The solution, however, is composed of a number of elements woven together. And the threads of this tapestry include dimensions related to both income and expenses. In terms of utilities, in addition to regulation, these strands also include support for low-income customers, the designation of energy as an essential service and advances to help with energy efficiency. There are solutions. But, my questions is, do we have the energy to bump these ideas up on the policy agenda?

By Timothy Wild, Calgary

Attending the conference in Nashville continues

some of the group I was hanging out with so I began walking in the direction where the group would be able to meet one of the last buses going back to the Scarritt Bennett Center at 10:30 p.m. When I got back to the 10:30 p.m., I just happened to cross paths with Rick Barnes. He had just arrived on foot to go back on the bus. I told him about the former Edmonton Street News newspaper and also about the three part stories I had written for June, July and August 2011 ESN Newspaper. Rick was interested in buying my papers with my feature stories. He then helped me out by buying all three newspapers that I had left. I carried with me some ESN Newspapers in my backpack! We became friends and exchanged addresses. I saved the money for the long upcoming journey home on The Greyhound Bus. Part #3 to be continued in the March 2012 ASN:

Saturday, Oct 15, 2011 Events, meeting more wonderful Street Newspaper people from the US. and the long journey home on The Greyhound Bus!

Andie W.L

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PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

HELPING SMALL BUSINESS, HELPING STUDENTS

Canada Summer Jobs helps small businesses create job opportunities for students, focusing on local priorities while achieving tangible results for both students and their communities. This is a great opportunity for employers to offset costs during the summer months.

The program provides work experiences for students, recognizing that local circumstances, community needs and priorities vary widely. In 2011 the federal Conservative Government increased the budget for **Canada Summer Jobs** by \$10 million, to total \$107.5 million.

Funding is provided to small private sector for-profit employers with 50 or fewer employees, not-for-profit and public-sector employers to create summer job opportunities for full-time students aged 15 to 30 who are intending to return to their studies in the next school year. Employers who wish to take part in this year's program must apply by February 29.

Proposals will be assessed using the following guidelines: service to local communities; jobs that support local priorities; jobs that provide career-related experience or early work experience; jobs with a salary that contributes to the student's income; employers who provide supervision and mentoring; project activities that are directed toward members of, and support the vitality of, an official language minority community; and employers who intend to hire priority students (those with disabilities, Aboriginals and members of visible minority groups).

Small private sector for-profit businesses with 50 or fewer employees and public-sector employers are eligible for up to 50 percent of the provincial minimum hourly wage. Not-for-profit employers are eligible for up to 100 percent of the provincial minimum \$9.40 hourly wage and mandatory employment-related costs.

Employers looking for more information may contact the Service Canada Centre at Canada Place on Jasper Avenue, go online at www.servicecanada.gc.ca or call 1-800-935-5555.

I think the **Canada Summer Jobs** Program is a win-win for employers, students and all Canadians. What do you think?

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Mental health should be a child's right



When I think about psychological problems that are caused by the physical, verbal and sexual abuse of children, it just leaves me speechless. It is naïve to think that the parenting system that we endure does not problems with shame, anxiety, fear and guilt. Our psychological distress, felt as individuals in our growing years has a deep root in what our culture accepts and the kind of outdated parenting system that has been used for generations.

Instead of going to the doctors to numb our feelings with medication, it would be more appropriate to assess our dysfunctional upbringing.

Parents are under the understanding that children are their belongings and they have the "right" to do with them what is deemed to be necessary to get them to be "obedient" and fully controllable. As parents we expect to control not only their behavior but their thoughts and their feelings. By the time we finish with them, these innocent children

have been robbed of their uniqueness and their authentic self, which takes from them the skills that are necessary to be able to develop into the incredible human beings that they were meant to be.

We as parents take from them the right to feel and express themselves without fear, without shame and without guilt. It is claimed that we should not blame the parents because they did the best they could but as a mother myself, I am able to see all the mistakes I made and how these mistakes will have an effect on my children. The fact is that we cannot change the past but we can learn from it. By pretending that I was a wonderful parent, my children will only repeat the same mistakes. Nothing can be changed if we are unable to acknowledge our mistakes.

What do these children learn from these experiences? Many would say that the adults' responses were necessary to teach the child the difference between right and wrong: between "good" and "bad" behavior. Verbal punishment is common in almost every home and school. It relies on shame as the deterrent, in the same way that corporal punishment relies on pain. "Shaming" is one of the most common methods used to regulate children's behavior. But what if we realize that shaming our children is harming our children? What if we realize that repeated verbal punishment leaves children with an enduring sense of being inherently "bad"?

As parents we tend to resort to shaming when we feel overwhelmed, irritated or frustrated, and we feel the need to control our children. Until very recently little considera-

tion has been given to its harmful effects.

We have mounts of evidence that the use of corporal punishment has long-term damaging effects, shaming a child damages his/her self image. The natural capacity of shame of human beings is one thing, but the rituals of household shaming through criticism, so called "joking," put-downs, threats are another thing.

Thinking about the children we must realize of the importance of teaching them self-worth, self-respect, self-confidence and, most important, to believe in themselves. Children are growing in very oppressive households where the only things that they hear are "no" and you are "bad." They get spankings for being children; we as parents expect them to be quiet, not to bother us while we are watching TV, and if we are having a "bad day," we expect our children to comfort us. The fact is that instead of parents we have behaved like grown children and we have failed to provide the kind of parenting that makes them proud of themselves and forms a strong sense of self. In the extreme, the only thing that we have taught them is to feel flawed and useless. Through our teachings they have learned rejection, fear, self-doubt, self-deprecation and lack of respect for themselves. They go to school like wounded souls having negative marks as bad, stupid, problematic, lazy, unruly, and good for nothing. Our words as parents have incredible power on our children. The same words that were used to defeat us and program us to be subservient are the same language that we continue to use on our children and this is causing them mental anguish.

Shaming messages are more powerful when they come from those we are closest to, from people we love, admire or look up to. That is why parents' use of shaming can have the deepest effects on children. However, shaming messages from teachers, older siblings and peers can also injure a child's self-image. Since children are more vulnerable and impressionable than adults, shaming messages received in childhood are significantly more difficult to erase.

Messages of shame are mostly verbal, but there can be great shaming power in a look of disdain, contempt, or disgust.

My father used to swear at me and call me disgusting names, this is one thing that I made sure I would not to do to my children but I still raised them with the notion that they were bad, or I yelled. I did improve my parenting skills but, unfortunately, in my household there was no demonstration of love. It was hard for me to give what I never had but watching other mothers, I learned and I was able to make every one of my children the center of my love.

Whenever I hear how "resilient" children are it makes me cringe. The fact is that more and more we are seeing wounded adults entangled in addictions, bad relationships, self-defeating patterns in life, developing mental problems like anxiety, phobias, panic attacks, eating disorders depression, etc. Childhood trauma does not disappear; it lingers; it develops and thrives in our unconscious mind. We encounter so called "well adjusted adults" wearing a false mask, existing and being tormented by their childhood traumas living a life of emptiness and true despair.

As adults we are expected to be "resilient" and come to terms, yet how easily children can be discarded by their parents' selfish reasons in their quest for "their happiness." Then as adults we are expected to accept the new family and be happy for them. Yes, I am happy for them but I did not ask to be born, my parents are the ones that

made that decision, where is their commitment to keep us safe and loved?

Parents have children for selfish reasons, maybe they were not careful and pregnancy happened or maybe they had a child to provide them with the love that they badly need. They have children with a particular role in mind that they expect the child to fulfill. When a child is born it already comes with a job. Some parents are unable to bond with their children, especially if their pregnancy was a mistake and the child winds up paying for their rest of his or her life for the parents' actions. When it comes the time that the child seeks independence, his or her parents see this kind of behavior as a personal threat or lack of respect, disobedience, ungratefulness and lack of love. Parents lack the knowledge of the different stages that children pass through to reach adulthood.

We go into marriage seeking a fantasy, we talk about love but in reality how can we love someone else when we have not learned to love ourselves. Through our childhood the only thing we have learned is to denigrate ourselves and hate everything about ourselves. When we lack love for ourselves the only thing that we have is body pleasure and convenience, at the expense of our dignity as human beings, we allow people to use us. We go through life insatiably looking for our version of love, which we feel someone else could fulfill. We go into marriage with a very deep void that we expect the other person to fulfill. A lot of times we try to fulfill this void with material things and this becomes exhausting because material things will never fill our void.

In order to love, we have to be able to trust; trust is not given but is earned.

We learned to trust our mothers through their nurturing and a very important bond is developed, a father is trusted through their words and actions. A father is such an important figure in a child's life. It is of great importance that the father lives from his heart by the rules he teaches to his children. Through a trustworthy father, the child will develop a sense of confidence and will learn to function more independently.

When fathers fail miserably in their responsibilities and they are emotionally insensitive to their children's needs, children are crushed and develop a longing for the father that they never had.

How many fathers are absent because of their work, because everything has become more important than their family—friends, drugs, alcohol, extra-marital affairs, sports, etc., anything but being the father that their children need him to be.

The fact is that, for children to grow up developing their unlimited potentials, they need nurturing and a healthy mental environment, otherwise they will continue to repeat the same mistakes that their parents did, carrying the dysfunctional baggage of their caregivers and end up being controlled by anxiety and depression.

This is a sword of two edges because, if a person has the courage to seek help, they could be labeled, overmedicated or stigmatized. Some times the stigma is more damaging than the anxiety and depression. This pushes people to struggle on their own, trying to overcome their problems through alcohol and/or prescribed drugs or isolation which is very damaging.

This represents a very dim way of living, why not develop a system that can enable people to become aware of their dysfunctional baggage, their dysfunctional programming and learn to be in control, by setting a complete set of beliefs, the kind of beliefs that

Continued next page

Mamma's Chickens



Chapter 42 The Vigil

Mamma's sickness continued to worsen over a long time, and we tried to adjust to it. My sister, Lynne, had come for a year to care of her. This took a lot of stress off Booper, but we were all getting physically and mentally worn down. Mamma moved into an apartment downstairs from Booper. She had purchased a home with a downstairs apartment in it to be closer to Mamma. This pleased Mamma very much because now she was closer to Booper and the kids and Mark, Linda and Jessica, however now she was further away from me, so I couldn't see her as often.

One night I was visiting her and she said, "Sherry, I had the weirdest dream last night. Your father was lying in the bed right beside me."

"Oh Mamma," I laughed hard, "That was just a dream."

"Oh no it wasn't, Sherry. It was as real as day." She told this story to anyone who would listen and seemed obsessed about it. "It almost made me sick to my stomach," she went on.

After all these years she still hated my father, as much as she did when he was alive, and would never let go of the bitterness that she felt for him. She went on to tell us how the only thing she didn't like about heaven was that he would be there. We all took it as another of Mamma's drama queen stories and didn't pay much attention to it.

Two days later Booper called me and said I had to take Mamma to the hospital. She was acting funny and she was not peeing. Sarah

and I made the trip down to the hospital to be with them. Booper had to leave, so Sarah and I stayed. They took tests and said that her kidneys had shut down and it may be just an infection, or it could be fatal.

The doctor came in to talk to Mamma and explain the situation. Very calmly she looked at the doctor and said she had read one of the drugs she took could do that. The next forty-eight hours would tell. A small voice inside of me said, "Stay." Although I had never stayed overnight before I felt I should then, so I ordered a bed, and they opened up the family room for Sarah. The thought nagging at me was that I didn't have any money to get out of the parking lot or buy food. I had to find a way around that. The best I could come up with was to call the kitchen and say, "You forgot to deliver Mrs. Fryer's dinner. Could you please send one up." That way we all had enough to eat. Those survival skills came through, when I needed them the most. We stayed up until the wee hours of the morning talking about every one of my sisters and brother, laughing and joking.

I said, "Mamma, what do you think is going to happen?"

She said, "I'll either get better, or I'll die." She was very matter of fact about it. "I don't like this world anymore," she said. "They are mean to the little children."

She said this because of what she had seen on the news on TV. All the while I watched the bag attached to the catheter, still empty, knowing what it meant, and yet not wanting to believe that anything so casual as a kidney could take my mother out. She had cheated death so many times and she would again. We would soon be back in her bedroom, laughing and gossiping again. Booper had called all the kids and family, just in case. They would arrive in the morning.

I went to sleep at the foot of my mother's bed for the last time. About six in the morning she started screaming in pain. I got her medication into her and it seemed to comfort her. I told her all the kids were coming to see her. She became very comical and started clucking like a chicken. I laughed and said, "Mom, you're so silly."

Then she said, "Chick, chick, chickens." and fell to sleep. I picked up a book and relaxed. Twice the nurses came in and tried to rouse her and I sent them away.

"Let her rest please," I said. I wanted her well rested when the family got there. The third time, I saw her draw the tinniest of breaths and the nurse informed me she was gone. The last thing she had done was to call her chickens to her side. She had always wanted God to take her mind before she left this world, saying it was God's way of easing you into the next world. I had to call Booper and tell her, "Mamma's gone."

"Gone where?" she yelled back, dreading the answer.

"She's dead," I said, hardly believing my own voice.

I was all ready to go out the door, when she screamed, "Mike!" My brother-in-law came to the phone. He always was the calmest of us all.

I don't know what came over me. My first thought was relief that she was gone, and then it was replaced by guilt for feeling that way. What kept going around in my head was, "Why me? Why me, Lord? There were so many others she liked better than me?"

Then I looked at her little dead body thinking that she wouldn't want anyone to see her like that. I washed her up, removed the IV, put her makeup on and dressed her in clean clothes, thinking they would come to see her, but many couldn't look. It surprised me. She was as beautiful in death as she had been in life.

Dear Mamma,

I never had the chance to say good-bye or tell you how much I loved you. But then you always knew you had your children's love. There have been a thousand times I've wanted to run to you for help or maybe even just to share something, or have a good laugh, but you weren't there. We went down a lot of rough roads together, Mama, you and me. I may have not been your favourite child, but I certainly never bored you.

You've been gone fifteen years now, and you're still the most complex, extraordinary person I ever knew. You taught me many things, some good and some bad, but most of them I'll remember forever. We never did get to take any of those trips we were going to take or spend any of Daddy's money. I guess he had the last laugh.

I am sixty-one years of age and never dreamt what a long journey I was going to take when I wrote that first chapter. And I found out I could tell stories. Not as good as you, Mamma, but pretty good, I think. The most valuable lesson you taught me was that I must always live my life in forgiveness no matter what is done to me. I will never fall prey to the tree of bitterness. The cost is too great.

But you say, "Sherry, what about Maurice?"

I say, "Mamma I'm going to forgive him."

"Sherry what about Doug?"

"Mamma. I'm going to forgive him."

"And all those men who raped you?"

"Mamma, my answer is still the same. I will not pay your price. It's too great, and in the end too many suffer."

As for the children of the circle game, I pray the curse will be broken and they shall be free to love as brothers and sisters. God bless the children of the circle game. Give my love to Daddy

This concludes Sharon Spencer's book. Copies can be purchased through Alberta Street News. Contact us at 780 428-0805 or email dumontlc@hotmail.com

Next month we begin a new series by another author.

If you want to volunteer its not as simple as some people think

Most people think becoming a volunteer is very simple. Not so! There is a procedure that takes time before they are accepted. A volunteer should be patient and compassionate. First, they are interviewed and the usual questions are asked. This procedure takes time. Then they are told that the agency has to check if they have a criminal record. The volunteer is told, if the police find a sex-offender's birthday is on the same date and year of their birthday, they have to get finger printed at the police station. This procedure also takes time. Some people who want to volunteer quit during the procedure, some stay and wait until the agency calls them, indicating if they are approved or not. I was shocked when told what volunteers have to persevere waiting for approximately two months, and it does get frustrating. I really admire those volunteers who, no matter what the circumstances, are still willing to volunteer their time with compassion in their hearts, even if they are not getting paid!

The volunteers donate their time to assist others. In my opinion they are not thinking of themselves but taking time to volunteer. Thanking all volunteers.

by Faidrah

A child's right

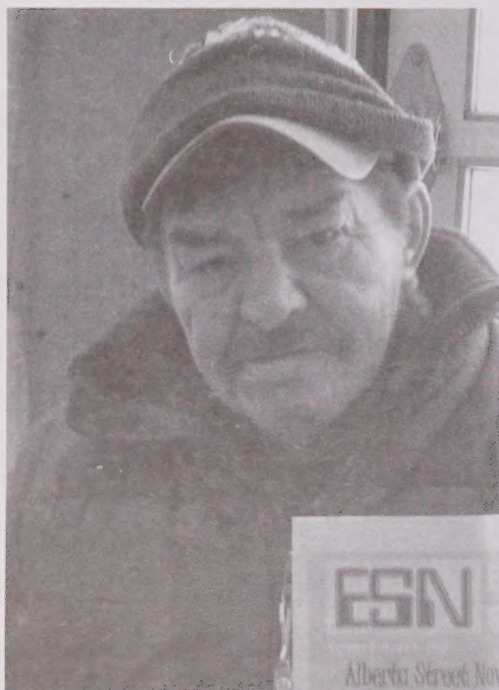
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come into alignment with our values. Learn how to think positively instead of going through life in a daze at the whim of negative thoughts, which tend to create negative results in the end. Learn how to deprogram from all those toxic beliefs that were implanted by our parents and other people. For me this transformation has been a real challenge but the journey has been incredible and just the knowledge that we are gifts and that we have been created in the image of our creator has provided me with the inspiration and the strength to live my life, knowing who I am and taking sole responsibility for my actions and behaviors. Living in alignment with my values allows me to live as an authentic self. I do accept myself unconditionally. My journey is not finished, I am a perpetual learner. The more I learn the more enriched I feel. I am blessed.

Maria B.

THEIR STORY

A Feature on Alberta Street News Vendors



Clifford

Born in Fort Vermillion, Alberta in 1949, Clifford was introduced to Edmonton Street News by a good friend and has been selling now for about three years. Today he is sitting inside the Strathcona Farmer's Market, which is good, because it is cold outside. On the sidewalk there are other people selling the paper, but they don't have badges. One of them jokes and yells at people passing by, telling them that he's an out of work comedian, on the street because his jokes suck.

Clifford does not yell or harass people. He sits quietly, greets people with a smile and thanks them if they buy a paper or donate. Clifford has a family, a daughter and son in Saskatchewan and two daughters and two sons in Peterborough, Ontario. They're good kids, he says, the daughters beautiful, the sons handsome. They don't ask him for anything, because he taught them well, taught them how to work. Now they are independent and strong, and when they come to Edmonton they treat him well. His ex-wife he does not communicate with, not wanting to disturb her.

When he was younger Clifford worked all over Alberta. He worked as a derrick hand on a drilling rig for years. On a double drilling rig, that means he stood sixty feet above the ground, tied by the waist with a rope, and reached out from the fingers of metal to pull in stands of drill pipe being whisked upwards by a set of collars as big around as a man's chest. He fell a couple times, and dangled fifty feet above the ground until the driller lifted the collars up so he could grab them and ride back up to this platform. Then he worked on a pipeline between Rainbow Lake and Rocky Mountain House, operating a Caterpillar with a sideboom, lowering 42-inch pipe onto the ground for the welders.

Clifford is a status Indian, but has seen no benefits from it. If you want anything from the government, he says, you have to kiss their ass, and he won't do that. He's also concerned about the affect new immigrants are having on the safety of Edmonton's streets, with the shootings, the knifings. It seems, he says, like the government is keen on helping new Canadians with housing and jobs, but ignore the oldest Canadians, the First Nations and Métis.

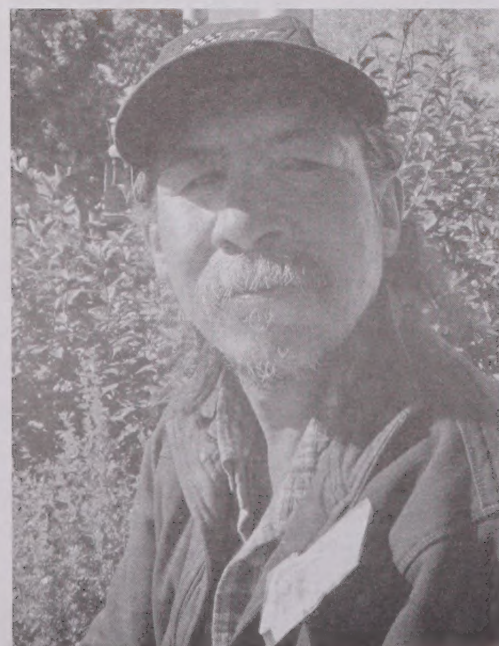
Clifford doesn't go to the shelters. He went once, and woke up with something biting him. He went to the doctor and had something, he says, something inches long and yellow, pulled from his skin. So he lives outside, finding heating vents in the winter to sleep by. Clifford likes selling Alberta Street News, loves meeting the people who are kind to him. He does not make plans. He lives day by day. He starts every day with a prayer, and prays every night before he goes to sleep. He doesn't pray for himself. He asks God to take care of his children, his siblings, the alcoholics, the drug addicts, those who are in prison, everybody who's in trouble. God, he says, takes care of him, otherwise he wouldn't be there.

While we're wrapping up another man approaches, and introduces himself as "another homeless guy". He has a large bruise on his face. When I take ten dollars out of my pocket to give to Clifford the other man tries to grab it from me, then from Clifford, but Clifford slides it safely inside his coat. You have to be quick and clever to live on the streets. Even with God on your side.

By Eric Rice

Death:

Alberta Street News vendor Victor Robillard



The Alberta Street News community has been saddened by the death of another vendor in January - Victor Robillard, who was featured on the cover of our November issue. Victor began selling the paper in 2004. He worked with his brother, Chris, outside the Strathcona Farmer's Market on Saturdays, as well as in other vending spots.

He is pre-deceased by two other brothers, Mark in 2011, and Thomas before that, as well as by his life partner, Phyllis, who also were newspaper vendors. Victor was one of the nine people involved in the Sweatbox Incident of 2003 when the Edmonton City Police rounded up homeless people on Whyte Avenue and, after a lengthy ride in a hot, over-crowded police van, dropped them off on in north east Edmonton. In November, two officers were found guilty of insubordination in the incident.

Funeral services for Victor were held in Athabasca.

By Linda Dumont
Photo by Eric Rice

Reflection -

Midst the chaos of Life

Herein lies the dilemma common to many: How, midst the chaos of life, to quiet the turmoil of the mind; to achieve a sense of worth; to know one's purpose in life. Happily, the answer to all such perplexing questions lies within us.

Egoism must first be tempered with humility, that we may mindfully go within in search of our other, higher, spiritual self. In time, new-found values replace those of consumerism; values at one with our God-given Goodness. Thus are we relieved of all disquiet, and thus, filled with inner-light's glow, do we reclaim our humanity.

By Our Faith Ministry, Calgary

Homeless man's idea of a Dog Day Afternoon

By John Zapantis

There's a homeless man walking up and down a downtown street, sticking his hand out to every passerby he meets.

People seem like they're all in a hurry.

They don't even look back to see this man without a helping hand, it ain't their worry.

He even plays the role of a comedian just to grab their attention,

but instead is ignored and gets no mention. He loses his artful skill at playing the part of a hopeless soul, and

turns into a raging bull, blowing his steam at every passerby.

People walking towards him quickly clear out in opposing directions.

Someone now runs to a phone booth and calls 911, as the cops are on their way to take this raging homeless man for immediate detention.

All of the sudden a distant police siren can be heard from six blocks away.

Now the scene looks like a re-enactment of the old movie classic,

Dog Day Afternoon, as out comes a knife as this homeless character

is now playing the part of Al Pacino while taking someone hostage,

yelling hysterically that everyone should stand back, or he'll attack whomever after.

Who would have thought that it would have ended this way.

Cops rush out of their vehicles pointing their guns at the head of this desperado waiting to see who will listen to his orders.

The victim held in the clutches of this hostage taker makes a lucky break, for freedom as he runs away from the threatening grip of his assailant.

Shots are then fired, the homeless man takes a bullet to the head

and once again a repeat of another homeless man shot dead, as his name makes the head lines and his wasted life is disposed by this publicity and disgrace.

Oh to those, who just do not understand the plight of the homeless

"He was just another lowlife, one down two to go."

As a thunderous laughter can be heard by that someone standing among the herd.

Oh yes, ain't it a shame when society sees it that way, one more dead victim

and every newspaper vendor box in our city is sold out again.